

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

E-rate modernization, as part of the President Obama's ConnectEd proposal, is essential to improve equitable educational opportunities for all children and to connect 99 percent of all American students with access to next generation, high-capacity broadband services and high-speed wireless. While the E-rate program has been successful at bringing technology and telecommunications into the classroom, improvements to bring the program up-to-date are needed. We urge you to move promptly to ensure that the most commonsense changes are implemented in time to be of use to schools during the next E-rate funding year and beyond.

A failure to modernize E-Rate will further entrench the digital divide. For many of our under-represented and underserved communities, high-capacity broadband access at schools and libraries is absolutely essential. This can be particularly true in suburban and rural areas. A recent analysis demonstrated that the wealthiest school districts in the country are almost twice as likely as the average school to have adequate broadband speeds. The schools serving the most financially challenged students are 30 percent less likely than average to have access to the same bandwidth. This is the case even though the E-rate fund is set up to provide the greatest discounts to the poorest schools—program modernizations should ensure improved outcomes for schools and libraries serving the lowest income communities.

The technological priorities of the E-rate program should be updated to fit current needs. Children require connectivity in the classroom, and technologies such as Wi-Fi which bring the Internet into classrooms should receive a greater emphasis than when E-rate was created in 1996. As Chairman Wheeler recently noted, “‘connectivity’ used to mean connecting to the school; today it means connections to each student.”

In order to have the greatest impact and to meet the President's ConnectED goals, updates to E-rate must focus on broadband capacity and infrastructure, transparency, accountability, and simplified administrative process, all of which will enable schools to select the fastest technologies at the lowest prices and stretch scarce program dollars farther. We encourage rapid action now, and comprehensive changes to the program in no less than one year. Implementing changes in time for the next E-rate funding year will have a profoundly positive impact in many areas of the country. There is no time to waste.

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
June 20, 2014
Page 2

This year 3.3 million high school seniors graduated relying on an E-rate program geared toward yesterday's needs. Please act quickly so that today's sophomores can see the benefits of an improved E-rate before they finish high school, and act comprehensively so that every school can afford the fastest, most economically-efficient technology.

Sincerely,



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Mark Meadows
Member of Congress



Ruben Hinojosa
Member of Congress



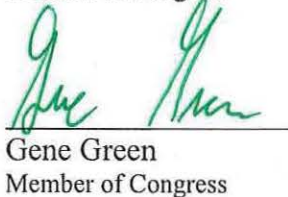
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress



Gene Green
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



Hank Johnson
Member of Congress



Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



William Enyart
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

cc: Commissioner Clyburn
Commissioner O'Rielly
Commissioner Pai
Commissioner Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21st century. I completely agree with your statement that "[t]he technological priorities of the E-rate program should be updated to fit current needs." I am committed to ensuring that the E-rate program evolves to focus on providing support for high-speed broadband both to and within schools and libraries. Schools need this broadband to take advantage of digital learning technologies, and libraries need to provide their patrons with high-speed access to the Internet.

The *Order* adopted by the Commission at our July Open Meeting takes significant steps to modernize the E-rate program by addressing the Wi-Fi gap in America's schools and libraries. We established an annual funding target of \$1 billion for Wi-Fi, as well as a more fair method for distributing funds so that *all* schools and libraries can benefit, including far more rural schools and libraries than in the past. Given that 40 percent of classrooms are not currently Wi-Fi-enabled, and nearly two-thirds of schools indicate that they do not have sufficient Wi-Fi capacity to meet their digital learning needs, it is critically important that we focus our limited program resources on connectivity, not only to the school or library, but also to the student or library patron. The *Order* funds this support for Wi-Fi through the combination of funds already available for this purpose and by utilizing savings associated with transitioning support from non-broadband services to broadband. At the same time, the *Order* ensures that adequate funding will also be available for broadband connectivity to schools and libraries and seeks further comment on the long-term funding needs of the program.

Moreover, to make E-rate dollars go even further, the *Order* adopts transparency measures to provide applicants with the pricing and connectivity data needed to make smart

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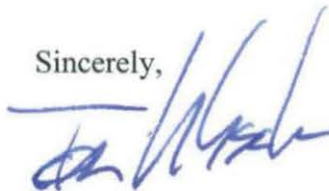
The *Order* also makes several changes to help make the E-rate processes faster, simpler, and more efficient for all stakeholders. It streamlines the application process by simplifying review of multi-year contracts, expediting small dollar, cost-effective applications, speeding review of all applications, requiring electronic filing, and enabling direct connections between schools and libraries.

The *Order* is a common sense, responsible step in the E-rate modernization process. We are targeting already available funds to meet the greatest current needs, we are getting as much as we can out of every E-rate dollar, and we are formally and expeditiously investigating the appropriate funding level for this program, based upon the steps we have taken to improve its structure and administration. But there is still more work to do.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools and libraries.

Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Bill Enyart
U.S. House of Representatives
1722 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Enyart:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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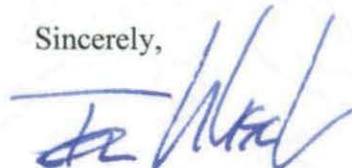
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Steve Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cohen:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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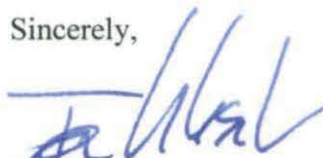
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Sam Farr
U.S. House of Representatives
1126 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Farr:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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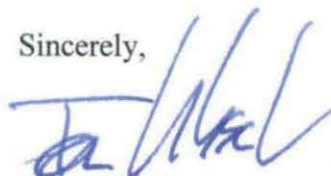
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Gene Green
U.S. House of Representatives
2470 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Green:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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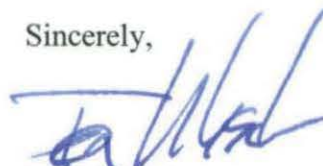
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E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools and libraries.

Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Rubén Hinojosa
U.S. House of Representatives
2262 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hinojosa:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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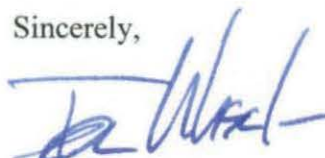
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Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Richard Hudson
U.S. House of Representatives
429 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hudson:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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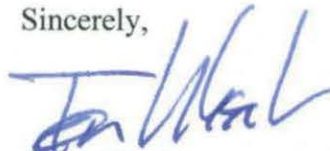
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WASHINGTON

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July 29, 2014

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
U.S. House of Representatives
2160 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Jackson Lee:

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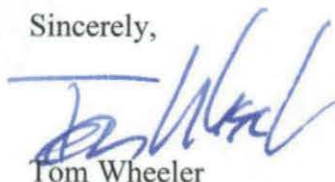
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Hank Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives
2240 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Johnson:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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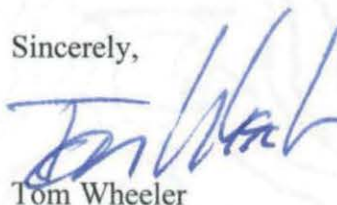
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over a faint, large outline of the state of Maryland.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Walter Jones
U.S. House of Representatives
2333 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jones:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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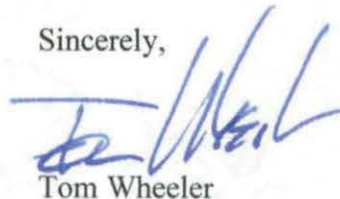
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
U.S. House of Representatives
2446 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Luján:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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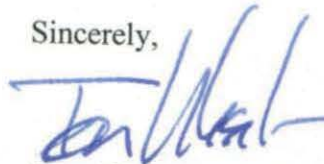
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Mark Meadows
U.S. House of Representatives
1516 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Meadows:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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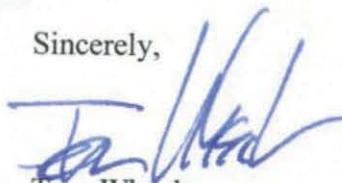
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Collin Peterson
U.S. House of Representatives
2109 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Peterson:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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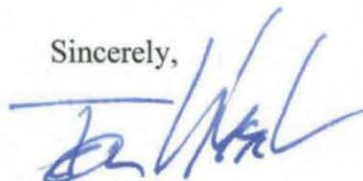
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Cedric Richmond
U.S. House of Representatives
240 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Richmond:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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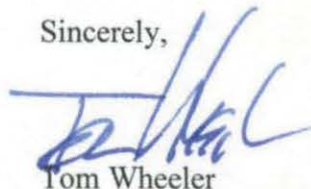
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Bobby Rush
U.S. House of Representatives
2268 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rush:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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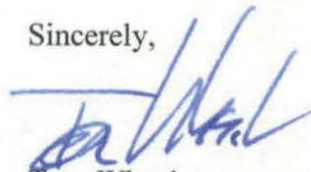
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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable David Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
225 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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The *Order* adopted by the Commission at our July Open Meeting takes significant steps to modernize the E-rate program by addressing the Wi-Fi gap in America's schools and libraries. We established an annual funding target of \$1 billion for Wi-Fi, as well as a more fair method for distributing funds so that *all* schools and libraries can benefit, including far more rural schools and libraries than in the past. Given that 40 percent of classrooms are not currently Wi-Fi-enabled, and nearly two-thirds of schools indicate that they do not have sufficient Wi-Fi capacity to meet their digital learning needs, it is critically important that we focus our limited program resources on connectivity, not only to the school or library, but also to the student or library patron. The *Order* funds this support for Wi-Fi through the combination of funds already available for this purpose and by utilizing savings associated with transitioning support from non-broadband services to broadband. At the same time, the *Order* ensures that adequate funding will also be available for broadband connectivity to schools and libraries and seeks further comment on the long-term funding needs of the program.

Moreover, to make E-rate dollars go even further, the *Order* adopts transparency measures to provide applicants with the pricing and connectivity data needed to make smart

purchasing decisions, encourages consortia purchasing to drive down prices, and ensures that applicants are selecting from the best possible bids through the lowest corresponding price rule.

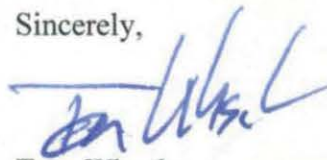
The *Order* also makes several changes to help make the E-rate processes faster, simpler, and more efficient for all stakeholders. It streamlines the application process by simplifying review of multi-year contracts, expediting small dollar, cost-effective applications, speeding review of all applications, requiring electronic filing, and enabling direct connections between schools and libraries.

The *Order* is a common sense, responsible step in the E-rate modernization process. We are targeting already available funds to meet the greatest current needs, we are getting as much as we can out of every E-rate dollar, and we are formally and expeditiously investigating the appropriate funding level for this program, based upon the steps we have taken to improve its structure and administration. But there is still more work to do.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools and libraries.

Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Carol Shea-Porter
U.S. House of Representatives
1530 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Shea-Porter:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21st century. I completely agree with your statement that "[t]he technological priorities of the E-rate program should be updated to fit current needs." I am committed to ensuring that the E-rate program evolves to focus on providing support for high-speed broadband both to and within schools and libraries. Schools need this broadband to take advantage of digital learning technologies, and libraries need to provide their patrons with high-speed access to the Internet.

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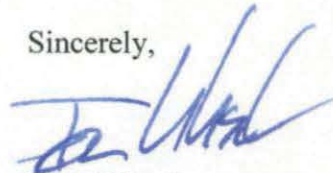
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The *Order* is a common sense, responsible step in the E-rate modernization process. We are targeting already available funds to meet the greatest current needs, we are getting as much as we can out of every E-rate dollar, and we are formally and expeditiously investigating the appropriate funding level for this program, based upon the steps we have taken to improve its structure and administration. But there is still more work to do.

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Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Juan Vargas
U.S. House of Representatives
1605 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Vargas:

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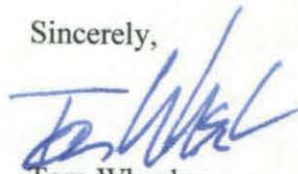
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